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THE TWO VISIONS;

OR,

THE CONTRAST.

AN AUSTRALIAN STORY.

"The thread of our life would be dark, heaven knows,
If it were not with friendship and love intertwined,
And I care not how soon I may sink to repose
When these blessings shall cease to be dear to my mind.
But they who have loved, the fondest, the purest,
Too often have wept o'er the dream they believed;
And the heart that has slumbered in friendship securest
Is happy indeed; if 'twas never deceived."—*Moore.*

BY

ROBERT WEST MAYNE.

SYDNEY:
F. CUNNINGHAME & CO., GENERAL PRINTERS,
186 PITT STREET.

1874.

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"Haud Immemor."

TO THE MEMORY OF

THOMAS MOORE,

"THE POET OF ALL CIRCLES, THE DELIGHT OF HIS OWN,"

Whose writings first induced the feelings that prompted a desire to follow in his footsteps.

This Little Work

IS MOST REGARDFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

In the subsequent pages, my first attempt at anything continuous, I have endeavoured to carry out the idea of Matthew Arnold, who says, in his "Study of Celtic Literature," that "the inevitable task for the modern poet henceforth is, as it was for the Greek poet in the days of Pericles, not to preach a sublime sermon on a given text, like Dante; not to exhibit all the kingdoms of human life and the glory of them, like Shakspeare; but to interpret human life afresh, and to supply a new spiritual basis to it. This is not only a work for style, eloquence, charm, poetry, it is a work for science."

And I must beg the indulgence of Critics, in thus, as a novice, aspiring "usque ad astra" at the first flight, for I am aware that the doing this renders me liable to the charge of presumption. But I would ask them to remember what the before-mentioned writer tells us in another place, viz., "the

truth is, 'few people have any real care to analyze closely in their criticism; they merely employ criticism as a means for heaping all praise on what they like, and all blame on what they dislike." And I trust, before they pronounce judgment, that they will examine what has been to me a troublesome though congenial effort, and kindly make allowance for all its deficiencies, in contemplation of the motive which prompted my daring.

And so, with much misgiving, I place my little book in the reader's hands, hoping, at any rate, that the time occupied in its perusal will not be considered to have been altogether thrown away.

ROBERT WEST MAYNE.

Jimbour, Queensland.
January 1st, 1874.

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BOOK I.

PART I.

PROLOGUE.

IF you will heark, my reader, you shall hear
What met my eye one summer time at eve,
As in the woodlands green my ponderings turned
On life, on living, and on dying too.
For, though 'tis bright and beautiful to live
When blest by fond affection's holy charm,
'Twere surely more acceptable to die—
If *that* has been denied you—than to bear
A wounded spirit 'neath a loyal breast.
Oh! This is torture—hell on earth—to think
That she, whose little smile you covet more
Than all the mighty globe could else bestow—
A smile that made you feel a better man,

And that her happiness was bound with yours,
And that you'd guard it steadfast to the last;—
That she, to gratify you'd spare no pains,
Had changed her smiles to frowns, her warmth to
cold!
To suffer this—and so to drag along
A desolate existence; grieving sore
For what it might have been, and what it is;—
That she, your only darling, bid you go
To break your trusting heart in silent woe.

* * * * *
* * * * *

This would be truly torture! and to him
Who'd wish, in such a frame of mind, for death,
Let Pity cry, God grant the weary rest.

* * * * *
* * * * *

To such an one as this, his lot is hard;
For let the circumstances be reversed,
Then (as I said before), how beautiful
And bright and brilliant it would be to live
When blest by fond affection's holy charm!
What rapture then to have another's weal

Reliantly confided to his care—
The only care he cared for in the world!
What bliss to know, one gentle being felt
A sense before unknown of deep delight,
In loving him who'd given her all his love;
And how he'd doubly prize the one who'd made
The passing time a pastime now for both.
  What pleasing thrills her smiles would then impart!
How cheering then to listen to her voice,
In sweet and winning tones that fill his soul
With innocence, and purity, and peace,
Making of earth a heaven on earth for him.
And, realizing this, how much *he'd* strive
To make of earth a heaven on earth for her;
So she might estimable deem the day
She told her dearest—not to go away.

* * * * *

* * * * *

  This would, indeed, be rapture; and to her
Who'd comfort such a faithful bosom thus,
Let Joy exclaim, God keep her ever glad.

BOOK I.

PART II.

EXORDIUM.

I.

SUCH were the thoughts that travelled through my mind,
Of things that might be, and of things that were
Happening to many of our human kind,
Who in their hearts the heart's best feelings bear ;
It has been thus in all times heretofore,
And will be so till time shall be no more.

II.

And so these musings passed, and then I saw
What I will tell you more of by-and-bye—
But first I'd like to know if nature's law,
The law of loving, has your sympathy ?
If not, then read no more, you lose your time
Because you won't appreciate my rhyme.

III.

If so, read on, if Poetry and Love—
  For they're inseparable—dwell in thee;
Though in this age, more serpent and less dove,
  We hardly dare admit that such things be;
For both of them are sadly out of place,
At least some say so, in the world's great race.

IV.

I care not what *they* say, it may be true—
  Let those who will, believe them, but not I;
Poor human nature well the day might rue,
  When both of these lie dead beneath the sky;
Although the hardest heart and hardest head
Might then combine to make the softest bed.

V.

But tender hearts, with little here below,
  And tough ones too, with much of every kind,
Must all alike the self-same journey go,
  And leave their beds, or soft, or hard, behind;
It matters very little in the clay
Whether our beds were made of down or hay.

VI.

Not that a soft one is to be despised,
  But softness is comparative, and so
All things in moderation should be prized,
  Because "tutissimus in medio;"
Although this won't apply to every lot,
In battle's midst, most likely you'd be—shot.

VII.

I fear my Pegasus has lost the track
  On which my muse had tried with him to soar,
And so I now at once must guide him back,
  And tell you what I promised you before;—
A little pull in the Didactic strain,
We'll then be fairly on the road again.

VIII.

We best fulfil our mission here, methinks,
  Who exercise our hearts as well as heads,
As nature meant us; then in all its links
  Will be complete th'electric chain that spreads
From souls on earth to where the angels shine,
For human love leads up to love divine.

IX.

And thou O mourning one! as yet unblest
  With all that makes life lovely, dont despair,
But tend the tree of Hope within your breast,
  For it may blossom when you're least aware;
Still, though a cross below you bear, bear up and
    never down,
So may you be adjudged to wear, on high, a glorious
    crown.

BOOK I.

PART III.

THE LANDSCAPE.

A GRASSY plain of far and wide extent,
And bounded on the east by rising grounds,
That from a distant range come rolling on—
Some high, some low, now narrow, and now broad—
In forms as varied as their number. All
With fadeless* forest more or less are crowned,
In contrast with the open arms† between,
That from the plain keep upward struggling through,
Working their way betwixt the hilly spurs
As if they wished to keep them further back,
And not allow them to encroach; and thus,
For many miles at times the contest lasts,
Till hemmed on either side they give it up,
And merge into the timbered ground beyond.

* The Australian forest trees are not deciduous.
† Inland in Australia "arm" is used conversely to denote a continuation, or inlet as it were, of open land from a plain, running up between the neighbouring ridges.

The ridges, too, on *their* parts seem to strive
As far as possible to stretch along,
And typify to speculative minds
Passions that oft bestir the human race;
And what these lead to, often is portrayed.

Some, when they leave the range from which they sprung,
Just like Humility come lowly on,
And keep their unassuming course unswerved,
'Till presently you see them slowly rise
And grow at length into a lofty peak;
Reminding you of One, of whom 'twas said
"The meek and humble He hath lifted up;
He hath exalted them of low degree."
Then their appointed business over here,
They gradually lessen, as if life
Contentedly to them brought its decline,
Until at last they mingle with the plain;
Showing that all, no matter high or low,
Or righteous, or unrighteous, all alike
Must to an earthly level condescend,
So far as they are earthy; but the soul,
The better part that speaks of better things,
Will then uprise and upward wing its way,
Just as the distant range has often soared,
And reared its lofty heads above the clouds.
But if this better part be in us not,
Or, being there, is unattended to,
Then we're no better than the beast itself—

The grovelling animal, and nothing more,
Nibbling away existence on the wold,
"Whose spirit goeth downward to the earth" *
When its ignoble life is ended here;
And better that we never had been born!

Another form of ridge may be observed,
That when it leaves the range comes towering on,
Proudly and pompously, as if to say,
''Tis mine to lord it thus among my mates,
Asserting thus my mighty dignity—
The which I never will abate one jot;
And thus do I intend to carry on,
And show them how much higher I than they.'
But soon is verified the saying wise,
"A haughty spirit goes before a fall;"
For all at once a falling off appears;
It drops down suddenly, away below
The level of all those around, on whom
It looked so superciliously before.
And so it goes along quite lowly now,
Seeming as if it did so in content,
And from its own free choosing; but it is
"The lowliness that apes humility,"
For it endeavours further on to rise
And overbear as in the days gone by;
But still again it falls, and still again,
Because it would not bend with grace at first.

* Ecclesiastes iii., 21

And this may illustrate, a story rare,
A legend beautiful of olden time
(Although you find it not in Holy Writ),
Wherein 'tis said one day our Blessed Lord,
With some of His disciples journeying,
Saw by the wayside a discarded shoe
That from some horse's foot had fallen off,
And asked his followers to pick it up,
That nothing might be lost—for even this,
He told them, might be turned to good account.
But they disdainfully refused to stoop
For such a purpose; purposeless to them
As they imagined at the time; and so
Our Lord Himself it quietly upraised,
And took it with Him as they passed along.

The day soon waxing hot, they made a halt
At a small village, where our Blessed Lord,
To all His fellow-travellers unknown
(And iron being there in value high),
Exchanged the horse-shoe for some cherries ripe;
And when they'd left the village well behind—
The heat by this time greater than before,
Causing renewal of the thirsty pangs
That erstwhile where they rested were assuaged—
He dropped, unseen, the cherries on the road.
When His adherents these perceived, they ran
To gather them most eagerly inclined,
Each with each vying who should get the most;
And this continued until all were gone.

Our Lord then spake in tones of deep reproof,
Explaining, at the which they were amazed,
To what they were indebted for the fruit
They had bent down for, even to the ground,
And in so doing showed unseemly haste.
In these words finishing the just rebuke,
"He that to bend to one small thing disdains,
May have to stoop to smaller, for his pains."

We yet may see another form of ridge
Advanced beyond its fellows on the plain,
And ending there abruptly, sharp and high,
As if in its endeavours to get on
And reach the other side it was compelled
By fate's stern hand to stay—remaining thus
A stony mass, now useless and unused.
And so with many a poor human heart,
"With striving weary and with longing faint"
To cross the dismal space that intervenes
'Twixt poverty and competence; and gain,
Content to do so in a moderate way,
The means of raising up a happy home,
That it might feel an interest in life,
And joyful bless the Giver of all Good.
But having tried to do its very best,
With all the talents trusted to its care,
And, like the ridge advanced beyond its mates,
Has kept itself unspotted from the world;
What wonder, when it finds it's efforts vain,
And those that have the power withhold their hand,

That it should inward grieve, and like the ridge
Present a stony face to all around!
For Wisdom, speaking through Experience, says,
"A merry mind the countenance makes glad;
But overcome by sorrow of the heart,
The spirit's broken down, and all destroyed."*

The watercourses, too, we now may note,
Though seldom met with; nature might have been
With these more liberal; but where they exist,
They're common both to ridges and to arms.
For first, they take their rise among the heights,
And travel on, with nothing to remark,
Until they reach the openings, and then
A course is to its best advantage seen.

Marked by a line of trees that points its way,
It takes the centre of the arm at times,
And so advances, 'till as if in sport
It darts across as far as it can go,
And with the ridge runs playfully along
That on that side has kept it within bounds.
Then presently it takes another freak;
It crosses over to the other side;
But all unwelcomed as it seems to be
By the opposing hill that meets it there,
It just remains a moment, and then off
Into the centre of the arm again,
And so along until the plain is reached;

* Proverbs xv., 13.

Then over that, as far as eye can see,
Its' line still marked by a thin belt of trees,
To where it joins the thicker belt beyond—
A sign that there the river will be found.

These watercourses only cross the plain
At distant intervals of many miles,
And they may show us all the good effect
Of perseverance and consistent aim,
When friendly arms are raised to help those on
Who try to make the most of this life here
As preparation for the life to come;
For all our perseverance is in vain,
And all our efforts personal may fail,
Unless at times assisted on by those
Whom Providence has blessed with such a power,
That they may use it providentially.
And when assisted thus, we then may help
Others who needed it as once did we,
And so a round of charity keep up,
Which "covereth a multitude of sins;"
For in the Book Divine this precept's found,
"Withhold not good from them to whom 'tis due,
When 'tis in thy hand's power so to do."

The watercourse across the plain shows this;
For though it may have gained the river there,
Its perseverance thus is useless quite,
Of no avail to others or itself,
When adverse droughts have parched its thirsty sides.

But when assisted by the rain, behold !
Prosperity once more along its banks,
And all again is happiness and joy.
And what was freely got is freely giv'n ;
For now it can impart the flowing wealth
To those who further on are needing still ;
And so, accordingly, it's waters pour
On to the river it had joined before,
And on, and on, renewing life to those
Whose strife with hostile seasons else must close.

BOOK I.

PART IV.

THE HOMESTEAD.

AT one point in the landscape just described,
Two watercourses, after taking rise
In different distant hollows of the range,
Had made the distance 'twixt them less and less,
While serpentining on, until at length—
Close by the confines of the thirsty tract
(That oftentimes has longingly in vain
For such a grateful advent stretched its arms*),
Circling about some ridges thus confined,
And kept from covering a larger space—
They both unite, then strike across the plain.

One of the many ridges so curtailed,
A part with timber crowned, a part with none,
Slopes gently downward, facing towards the south;
And near its base, where these divisions join,

* See note 2, p. 8.

A nearly isolated rocky knoll—
All sheltered by the brushy undergrowth
As well as by the branching boughs above—
Projects in prominence, as if to know
The reason it was stopped and so restrained;
Now, rising grounds, or treed, or treeless, end,
A little way an open flat,* and then
The waters meet, but here without a glen.

And on the upper portion of the slope
A homestead† rests, the dwelling-place of those
Who have the care of all the flocks and herds
That graze on all the splendid country round.

Conspicuous in the centre stands the store,
A building lofty and of gray-white stone,
Whose iron roof or gable towering high,
When many miles away you may descry,
As you approach from either south or west.

The cosy cottage of the manager
Next claims attention, looking trim and snug,
With spacious garden spreading down in front,
Where in the summer you can coolly walk
Beneath the trellisses, and pluck the fruits
That temptingly in luscious clusters hang;
Then in the bower you peaceful may recline,
And contemplate the rural scene beyond.

---

* A "flat" is level ground, either open or timbered, up to a couple of miles or so in extent. When larger than this, if open, it is called a "plain," and if timbered, a "forest."

† A squatter's residence in Australia is a "station," but as this word is used so much with railways, its local designation seemed less appropriate as a heading for this part than the above.

A plain with variegated verdure clad,
And through its midst a timber-margined stream,
Whose waters, played on by the evening sun,
Reflect in burnished brilliancy his hue,
Harmonious contrast of the green and gold.
Some flocks of sheep are visible afar—
Their thirst just quenched, now heading for the camp;
The shepherds with their white umbrellas raised,
Their dogs behind them, bringing up the rear.
A number of the cattle may be seen,
But not so far away, about the creek*—
Their varied colors adding to the view.
Some in the water lazily remain,
While others, active, have gone off to feed,
And more yet loitering in the shadows sweet,
Cast by the tree-tops on the sultry soil—
With these the calves, still heavy from the heat;
Though this sensation very soon would change,
Did they but know that by that blackened stump,
And out of sight to them, though not to us,
Some Dingoes lurk†—so like the crafty fox,
In habit as in look—prepared for prey.
But actively or passively employed,
In one respect the cattle are agreed,
And that is, with the flies to battle fierce—
The flies, the flies, the flies, the flies, the flies!

* In Australia the lesser watercourses that run into the rivers are called creeks the smallest are called gullies.
† The wild dogs of Australia—very destructive to young stock.

Those pertinaceous plagues of man and beast*—
Whisking their tails above, below, around,
With such a sweep, you'd think those members brisk
Must with perpetual motion be endowed,
So swift and so incessant is their swing.
  And towards that nearer sheet of liquid gold,
The one that's so much longer than the rest,
Rolls rapid from another place remote,
On the extensive tract within our ken,
What seems as nothing save a cloud of dust;
But it discovers, as it closer moves,
Some handsome horses, gambolling along,
In *their* turn coming in to get a drink;
The old and steady when anigh the pool
Slacken their speed, and slowly saunter on,
While all the young, impetuous and wild,
Still curvet in advance, though they at times
Stop short, and turn about, and give a snort,
Impatient that their elders lay behind.
  And wheeling round the gums† now overhead,
Some native ducks are croaking out in rage—
Their watery existence thus disturbed
By fillies frolicsome, and cranky‡ colts;
For when these reach the brink they make no pause,

---

* The flies, the flies, the flies, the flies, the flies!
If they in Pharoah's age were half so bad,
No wonder when he dreamed about the kine
That none remained but lean ones at the last.
But now, still worse, upon our human kind,
The same effect's produced; for if you ask
What makes Australians thin, and have weak eyes?
The answer's clear—it's nothing but the flies.—*Printer's Devil.*

† Gum trees. The common name of several varieties of the species Eucalyptus, very numerous in Australia.

‡ Cranky, sprightly.—*Walker.*

Nor quaff as other sober animals
The life-sustaining fluid mostly do,
But in they reckless rush, and plunge, and splash,
Enveloping each other soon in spray.
  And on the opposite bank, arrested there
By the unwonted sounds they hear below,
The cause unknown, and wondering what it is,
Sit statue-like, with sudden stillness seized,
Two graceful kangaroos, with ears erect,
And paws in pretty posture pendant placed,
Their attitude a watchful soothed repose.
  The waters here a larger surface show,
Because they have ingeniously been stayed
And kept from running off in times of flood;
An earthwork firm below them walls them in,
When from the mountains they come pouring down,
Until they reach a certain height, and then
To one side they escape, and round the dam
Rejoin their course—till elsewhere stopped again
In manner similar; and so the chief
Deficiency of nature hereabouts,
Is compensated thus by means of art.
  And on the beaten track still nearer hand,
From right and left, some teams are on the move;
These, laden high, are bearing down the wool,
The *staple* product of the country side,
In ponderous waggons, or in lighter drays,
By horses some, by bullocks others drawn.
Those with the lower loads are bringing up
Supplies of rations, and of various goods,

For stations, or for townships further out,
With aids to industry* surmounting all—
Women and children seated on the top.
  And midway 'twixt the slow-advancing teams,
Just where the road inclines to cross the creek,
And at this moment almost in a line
Beyond those two white-painted paddock gates,
Through which you pass from here to reach the road,
A little buggy briskly bowls along;
It's canvas hood upraised, to shield the sun
From him beneath who drives the showy steeds—
Two golden chestnuts, silver manes and tails,
With faces white, and white about their feet.
No useless trappings incommode their backs;
The collars on their necks to bear the draught,
With straps depending to sustain the pole,
And traces with the carriage to be joined;
Nor wear they witless winkers on their heads,
But simple bridles free the noble eye,
And reins for guidance constitute the whole.
  The natural communication, too,
Has been by artificial means increased;
For near the highway, running parallel,
The telegraphic wire glides over now
What a few years ago were lonely wilds,
Where kangaroos and dingoes held sole sway;
And through yon forest gap it disappears,
Conveying, doubtless, many hopes and fears.

---

* See Russell's song, "To the West."

All this is very goodly to behold,
On such a lovely eve, and may suggest
A picture such as Turner loved to paint;
With this before him, no one could forbear
To "look through nature up to nature's God,"
And haply thus His loving kindness sing.

My Shepherd Lord! I shall not lack,
For Thou art with me on the track,
And led by Thee in holy ways,
Sure good will follow all my days.

For Thy namesake Thou doest this,
Restoring thus my soul to bliss,
And mak'st me lie in pastures green,
Beside the waters so serene.

What though I have to leave the grass,
And through death's shadowy valley pass,
Safe in Thy love I'll fear no ill,
Thy rod and staff shall comfort still.

A table, too, shalt Thou prepare
Before me, 'gainst my foemen there;
With oil shalt Thou anoint my head,
And so the troublous pass be sped.

With mercies such as these bestowed,
My cup will soon be overflowed,

While drawing onward o'er the wold,
My Shepherd Lord, to gain Thy fold;
And evermore, though yet I roam,
Thy dwelling-place shall be my home.*

But see, the setting sun has swiftly sunk
Aback yon gilt-edged cloud that hangs so low,
And we so long have lingered in the bower—
The shades increasing as we thus protract—
This homestead large we can't much longer view.
Behind the cottage,† further up the slope—
And at the bottom of the brow that skirts
A table-top, some distance spreading back,
And rising then into a well-marked hill,
That from the station has received its name—
The handsome stables and the haystacks lie;
And from the intervening open space,
Towards where the woolshed‡ looms upon the plain,
Whose roof a golden cupola now crowns,§
A roomy street declines, and down its sides
Of good extent, at intervals, are placed
The habitations of the numerous hands,
With wooden walls well white-washed while we write.
But buildings on a station in the bush‖
Are not so mannered as their corporate friends

* This attempt at another version of a subject so often handled will, perhaps, be considered only a work of supererogation, especially as it has been so masterly treated by Addison in the lines commencing "The Lord my pasture shall prepare;" but even these, though extremely beautiful, are not altogether literal, nor do they carry the figure continuously throughout. Hence the above.—April 7, 1869.

† See line 10, page 17.

‡ Poetic license. The woolshed in fact is not in sight.

§ Intended to convey the double idea of a westerly direction, and of a setting sun.

‖ The Australian term for the country in contradistinction to the town.

(And this, perhaps, may oftentimes apply
To domiciled as well as domicile),
For all one row so much politeness lacks,
As rudely on the rest to turn its backs.

Then off the street, adjacent to the store,
Are other cottages; surrounding one
You'll see a tiny garden—all the year
Full of fresh flowers, and with a fig tree fine,
In season loaded with delicious fruit.

And where the street its downward course begins,
Are many workshops—we may note a few:
The smithy, where the blacksmith plies his trade,
An engine portable before the door;
Adjoining this the wheelwright is at work,
And next to him the carpenter's employed;
While in the meat house opposite will be
The butcher, cutting up some chops for tea—
As in the bush, but this is by-the-way,
They dine about the middle of the day.

* * * * *
* * * * *

Now hush! when man is ceasing from his toil,
And Twilight, handmaid dutiful, prepares
To clothe her mistress, Nature, with the cloak
In which she covers up her sunny charms,
And ending day reminds us of a close,
Alike inevitable, 'tis the time
To bend our steps from these abodes of life,
And view, in fitting mood, the home of death.

A paled enclosure, on another slope
Unseen, though but a little space away,
And shielded sure by overshadowing trees,
All unaffected by the season's change*—
That mutely tell so touchingly of Him,
The one immutable, eternally,
Who ever guards and "ever is the same"—
From general gaze is thoughtfully retired;
This is the cemetery, sacred spot,
And such a sense of calm pervades the plot,
You scarce could blame the soul oppressed with care
In envying the quiet sleepers there.

* * * * *

* * * * *

For many miles around the land is fenced,
And subdivided into paddocks large,
In which the fattening flocks may freely feed.
And not by means of wood and wire alone
Are these improvements always carried out;
Along a leading ridge a wall of stone
Has been upraised, and like a breastwork looks
To keep an enemy out in time of war.
But civilization to these regions fair,
Though bringing much,† has not as yet brought that;
Nor need they fear such sad catastrophe;
No nation now so ill-advised will be,
As to attempt to try and tax *their* tea.

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* See note 1, page 8.
† Two railway lines now run through portions of the district

But, listen! hear that cachinnation strange,
Made by those birds that cluster on yon bough;
One leads them off, the others then unite
In very loud discordant mocking laughs;
Now lessened by degrees, and now renewed,
If possible, more vigorous than before,
And long continued; for they never cease
While any power of utterance yet remains,
And then they seem reluctant to leave off,
And soberly compose themselves. This now
Is still another sign of eventide;
For, curiously enough, these birds unique,
At set of sun, at sunrise, and at noon,
Set up their extraordinary laugh,
With regularity most wonderful;
So much so that when all this country new,
The presence owned of pushing pioneers,
And primitiveness in the bush prevailed,
The Laughing Jackass, as he first was called,
Another name obtained, "The Settler's Clock,"
By which he came to be still better known—
Procuring this from the peculiar way
He marked the three important times of day.

But hark! the evening bell from gum-tree near
Proclaims, so welcomely to many an ear
At this extensive homestead on the Downs,*

* Darling Downs.

Larger by far than many inland towns,
That working hours have passed, and daylight too,
And so good evening to it and you.

END OF BOOK I.

BOOK II.

PART I.

THE FIRST VISION.

"Oh, life is a waste of wearisome hours,
Which seldom the rose of enjoyment adorns,
For the heart that is soonest awake to the flowers,
Is always the first to be touched by the thorns."—*Moore.*

SO, in the woodlands green, this summer eve,
My meditations took a second form,
In humour speculative luring me
From abstract thoughts that first me all engrossed,
To scenes descriptive of material life,
As variously around me carried on;
But still another shape they now assumed.
And as I, wondering much, reclining lay,
Trying to realize my new conceit,
External objects slowly disappeared,
Leaving me wrapt with dreaminess; and then
A voice came down, and near me softly said—

"Inquiring mortal! Dost desire to learn
Man's mental state in such a place as this?

Think'st thou men's souls are less affected here
Than eke in busy towns or older lands,
By all the subtlety of secret fires
That fiercely burn, or pleasant warmth impart,
In that great fireplace, the human heart?*
Then look, and looking feel, and feeling, know—
That were it possible to penetrate
The private life of any thoughtful mind,
To be on friendly footing in its home,
Acquiring access to its room for dress—
Thou'dst view its well-filled wardrobe with amaze!
And could'st thou then have power to touch the spring,
Disclosing thus, 'the secret drawer' within?
Its records manifold would tell you why
On such a day the mind of one appeared
In gay attire; and why, perhaps the next,
Or the day after, this was thrown away
For grave habiliments that *must* be worn,
Despite the valet Inclination's wish
To deck his master out in lively suits.
Were all this possible in every case,
Thou'dst find that one but typified the rest;
And that what now to you shall be revealed,
Exemplifyeth in a twofold phase
The only difference—the change of garb.
The rule of love is wholly unconfined;
And whether always happily or not,

* Psalm xxxix., 3.

The tranquil bush, the irritable town,
Acknowledge with an equal force the sway.
But imperturbability the cloak
Assumed when private precincts have been passed,
Prevents the dress from being seen—and thus
Men seem to one another more exempt,
In such a quiet country place as this,
From all the stirring feelings of the soul;
Because the more the contact with their kind,
The more the breath of passion fans the flame
Itself creates, and blows the cloak aside."

The latter words fell faintly on my ear;
The voice was gone, the revelation came.

A lonely road o'erleads a lonely plain,
Of cheerless solitude a vast expanse,
Though observation should so far extend,
As faculty could feasibly allow,
And range from north to east to south to west;
Like Noah's dove when at the first despatched,
'Twould nothing find whereon it could alight,
So, weary-winged return to whence it came.
For all that keenest scrutiny can spy,
Is one unbroken dull monotony
Of superficial green on level ground,
While super-fluitant and all around
Is one unvarying, unenlivening blue!
Save where one little clump of stunted wood

Outbraves the bleakness—but without relief,
As isolated there it only makes
The chill of desolation more intense
And more unbearable.
And yonder steed
Is now experiencing the consequent—
Chafing and fretting at his pace restrained,
As if he longed to chide the one he bears
For hastening not across this dreary way.
And not solicitous by this alone,
Over against him he has now caught sight
Of what a little time ago appeared
A cloud, no bigger than a human hand,
Outspreading while it rapidly draws nigh;
And more and more he tries—companion true,
Sagacious animal,—yet vainly still,
To rouse his rider from his languid mood,
Though daylight at this moment only shows
Enough to render darkness visible;
But, presently, a rumbling noise reverbs,
And presently a vivid flash relumes,
And presently a thunder-clap resounds,
From which in fright the quadruped recoils.
But this unconsciously attains his wish,
By stirring up his master to a sense
Of what the threatening heavens prognosticate;
For now in saddle, starting up erect,
His eye flings out a rapid circling glance,
Full of a proud contemptuous disdain—
Withdrawing that, his horse he then regards,

And thus addresses him:
My faithful friend,
And only intimate, I marvel much
Thou'st been so patient with thy laggard lord,
In face of all before us; never mind,
I see ahead what thou canst not discern,
Some trees that cluster close upon the track;
We've time to reach them yet! Then, let us press
To seek the shelter of their branching screen,
And so await the coming of the storm.

The thicket gained, the tempest not begun,
The refugee dismounted, and disposed
The reins in order, that the one they'd curbed
Might pick the grass, or rest, as most inclined;
As for himself, he sullen stalked along
Until he reached the timber's outer edge,
Then, with his eyes defiant cast about,
His cooped imaginings were thus expressed:

"A fitting spot for such an one as I!
Here, free from prying looks and rude remarks,
Because inquisitive, I vent may give
To all the bitterness my heart contains.
Oh Destiny! Hast thou not done thy worst?
Is't not enough to inner rage endure,
But I must suffer turbulence without?
To be out-banished to this district drear
Alone, so lone; but here, I must perceive,
Nature arrays herself against me too.

Tis true she is a woman—that explains;
As woman is the cause of all my woes.
For Fate is feminine, and so is she
Whose love I fondly thought with mine to blend,
In compound true of earthly happiness.

But though 'tis trying terribly to bear,
What adverse circumstance too oft compels,
The struggle for sufficiency of means,
Continually ending in defeat;
Renewed though it may be from time to time,
Till all one's 'milk of human kindliness'
Becomes a mass coagulate and sour,
Breeding a state abnormal of resent
Against what seems the world's conspiracy,
Yet all this can, and has, and will, be borne;
And still the holding soul may never droop,
Pierced, notwithstanding, from the head to foot
With arrows, in this unremitted fight,
Because an open foe may be withstood;
But if one dart from Cossack Cupid's bow
Has found its aim, the smitten heart lies low.

I might have been—no matter—something else,
If she—the one I loved—had loved me too;
I might have been—no matter—elsewhere now,
If she—the one I loved—had interchanged
What I so freely rendered up to her;
But, 'I am what I am'—so lightnings glare,
And thunders rattle, on your victim; yes,
And hurricanes crash round his aching head;

It matters not—yon little can augment
The pangs that all absorb his troubled breast."

Seemed hushed the elements as thus he spoke;
But now he stopped; and very soon there came
With gentle wind a soft and soothing shower,
As if his mother Nature, pitying,
Were melted all in tears at his distress;
And he was calmed by this, though not relieved.
But yet again his charger claims his care,
For he confidingly has trotted up,
And coming close behind his master, leans
His head upon his shoulder, with a neigh
Petitioning protection 'gainst the breeze,
That from a blast has swelled into a gale;
So in the densest of the clump they drew,
And there ensconced themselves; and now the rain
Increased and thickened, till this novel scene
Became invisible. But from its place,
Swept towards me as it gradually waned,
In words of passion, though in tones subdued,
Came this lament:

Broken down and broken hearted,
Is it strange I can't rejoice?
Tis—not that my fortune's parted,
Tis that I have not a voice
As a husband, as a father—
Tis—that painfully I feel;
No one cares how much I'd rather
This—than all mere worldly weal.

Prate me not of parents pleasures,
  Chant not charming childhood's cheers,
Mock me not with merry measures,
  What to me are such but jeers ?
If you speak of sighs of sadness,
  If you drone of dreary dreams,
If you mention mental madness—
  These are *my* familiar themes.

Nature gave me strong affections,
  Heart with heart that could agree,
Mind inclined for good reflections—
  What's the good of them to me ?
All creation seems to mock me ;
  Others live, and love, and die ;
Love of naught have I to rock me ;
  Life to me's a bitter lie.

And lingering on the air
The mournful accents slowly died away.

BOOK II.

PART II.

THE SECOND VISION.

"Go where we will, this hand in thine,
Those eyes before me smiling thus,
Thro' good or ill, thro' storm or shine,
The world's a world of love for us."—*Moore.*

JUST such a change that fortune fair would bring
To him who's felt mischance's poignant sting
Came o'er me now, as in the other's stead
A scene of magic beauty was declared.
The watery curtain scarce had intervened,
Veiling the vapoury vision from my view,
Before it *re-arose*, exhibiting

A spectacle of soothing seemliness,
Of Nature in her "witching" evening dress,
The fascinating one she dons the when
She reaches home and doffs her cloak again.

But this has been so frequently described
I cannot do it justice; yet I'll say,

As tribute to its praise, that since the two,
Nature and all true poets, both combine,
Endeavouring each other to outvie
In the performance of their several parts—
The one displaying with consummate grace
What all the rest so well delineate,—
They must experience the greatest charm
In harmonizing thus; and 'tis a proof,
When dispositions generous agree,
So fully as they've always done in this,
The object of their mutual regards
Must have some innate virtue in itself.
For if 'tis true that like produces like,
It follows, as the sunflower does the sun,*
That like is also influenced by like,
That good induces good, and *vice versa*,
As sure as pole-star is in Minor Ursa.

Let us now contemplate the Southern Cross,
And all the constellations lighting up
Yon jewelled dome, that argus-eyed surmounts
What seems a real Paradise; for here
Ithuriel would not require his spear;
No toads exist to whisper in the ear†;
But all the best concomitants prevail.

Half way adown an undulating slope,
That towards us turns with equable incline,

* "As the sunflower turns on her god when he sets,
The same look that she gave when he rose."—*Moore.*
† From the dry nature of the country. See last lines, page 15.

A lovely garden settles in the midst.
Its roofed rorifluent recesses ramped*
By native evergreens with clustered flowers,
Rejoicing in the rich and rosy hues
Peculiar to a semi-tropic clime;
And plentiful parterres of perfumed plants
The senses satisfy of sight and smell,
While, by the banks, beside the blooming beds,
A row of "Bunya" rears such stately heads†;
And foreign fruits, though few, are not forgot—
Some shady Citrus‡ figure in the lot.

Girding the garden groupingly around,
On grassy lawn are dotted park-like shrubs§;
Mid these some feathered tribe are nestled now,
With plumage corresponding to the flowers,
And very often musical in voice.‖
The Bell bird, with its tiny tinkling note,
That tells the thirsty traveller where to drink¶;
The Organist,** whose full and mellow sounds
Ring swellingly in brightening morning prime;
And parrots numerous,†† trainable to talk—

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* This line is intended exclusively for perusal by the writers of some of the articles in "London Society."

† Bank, a mound raised at the side of a garden. See Border, Nuttall. But using "banks" here in another sense, these two lines might apply to a well-known part of the beautiful Botanic Gardens, Brisbane. The Bunya Bunya is the fruit-bearing pine of Queensland.

‡ The fruit called "apple" in Genesis iii., 6, Solomon's Song ii., 3, and Joel i., 12, is supposed to be that of some of the Citrus species. This is, of course, for the information of the youngsters.

§ The young Brigalow may often be seen thus.

‖ Australian flowers and birds *have* perfume and tone; though not al.

¶ Its metallic note is never heard away from water.

** Or Organ bird, a large handsome magpie.

†† Melodious.—Nuttall.

The best for this, the Parrot-Cockatoo,
Familiarly called "Joey" from his cry.*

Beyond the circling lawn to right and left,
Windingly facing it, umbratic trees
Stand out colossal from the woods in rear.
Their sturdy stems the columns represent,
Their branches the entablature set forth
That bear the watchful dome on either side,
As opposite—where summit of the slope
Shows horizontal with the timber tops
On both hands near—it rests on radiant roofs
Of sundry homes that, in argental rays
From studded stars, are partially revealed;
To these, through lawn, tend tracks for those who choose
Their well-timed hospitality to use.
Thus, in our Father's house on high, we know
Are mansions manifold for all below,
Who, by the good old paths† that thither lead,
Seek for the refuge fitted to their need.

Completing the circuitous support
By which the vault bespangled is upheld,
Just overhead is placed a sombre cloud,
With wings to both the forest lines outstretched,
Discharging gently now a shower slight,
That breezes bountiful have blown behind,

* The finest birds, both in plumage and note, are in the dense scrubs near the coast, but their mention here would be incongruous.
† Jeremiah vi., 16.

Leaving, as heretofore, the tableau clear.
  And while we wonder how it plays its part,
Keeping the portion lotted to its share
From falling down on our bewildered pates,
An aureate glow the firmament o'erspreads;
And soon its warming influence extends
To all beneath as well. Then, on a point
Of glimmering gable gilded with its gleams,
A golden yellow mass conglomerates,
That, risen free, becomes a brilliant ball,
Shedding a gloriance worthy well of heaven.

* * * * *

* * * * *

A master poet has maligned the moon,*
  In terms ill-measured, though in well-marked verse;
How sad that what was meant to be a boon,
  So often turns out nothing but a curse;
That talents, vivid as the sun at noon,
  Should be employed to foul the universe—
Alluding not to strolling-night fraternity,
So much as to the poet's great infirmity.

Perversity! Perversity! Alas,
  How many noble natures have you floored†?
From Eden-time till now you've brought to pass,
  All that to Disobedience has been scored;

---

* Don Juan.—"The sun set, and uprose the yellow moon, &c."
† Floor, to strike down, to prostrate.—Nuttall.

Provoked and proved the fiat, snake of brass!
On progeny shall parent's petulance be poured.
Came Sin by Disobedience? yes. But whence the latter?
"The offspring of *your* wayward youth."* 'Twas *you* begat her.

* * * * *
* * * * *

Sweet Luna now is culminating fast,
And by her means—for she has been assigned
The feminine as mark of excellence,
Because her artificer first essayed,
In this case as in "human form divine,"
An inexperienced hand upon the male†—
Is brought to light why mortals are so blind;
Their troubles mostly making for themselves.
Had we "the evidence of things not seen,"
We should have felt that Providence sustains,
Though oft by ways inscrutable to us—
Enabling each to bear the weight imposed,
Whether by visitation from above,
Or through "vexatious vanity" below;
Nor always deems it needful to disclose,
What must our stupid unbelief expose.

But now the moonbeams manifest the power
Of darksome body, that our upturned gaze,

---

* Corsair.
† Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears,
Her noblest work she classes, O,
Her prentice han', she laid on man,
And *then* she made the lasses, O.—*Burns*

With foolish fearfulness thought insecure,
Saw nothing in but cause of great alarm*;
For—lodging either end on neighbouring trees
Where limbs from trunks project, its curving crown
Just on a level with the topmost tips—
In cloud is set a silver shining bow,
Phenomenon as exquisite as rare,
And eke as short lived; yet, perhaps for this,
The presence we pre-eminently prize,
Which, overspanning us in beauteous bend,
Another token adds to many more
That He His faithful will to peace restore.†

Time speeds. By this, the matchless gem
In Nature's dewy diadem
The "keystone of the arch"‡ attains—
Midnight majestically reigns.
And now the wind that in this southern clime
To Zephyr in our motherland responds—
The rude and roaring there,§ the gentle here,—
Tempered by tempesting the tropics through,
Where his tumultuousness left behind,
Explains, perhaps, the gales at Equinox.
Benignant breezelet that "dispersed" the shower
(Milder than native troopers do their kin),
Brings tuneful sounds, another sense to please;
And listening eagerly, they closer come,

* I cannot help fancying this is a line of Longfellow's; if so, I shall be glad to acknowledge it.—*Robert West Mayne.*
† See Isaiah liv., 9-10.
‡ "Midnight, of Heaven's dark arch the keystane."—*Burns.*
§ "Cease rude Boreas, blustering railer."—*Dibdin.*

Until an elfin current from the east
Springs up and dissipates the shaping words.
But Boreas, some latent former fire,
Aroused by interfering start up thus;
Uncalled-for opposition quick resents,
By several well-directed vigorous puffs,
That check and curb his ill-defined career;
Yet obstinate, like others of his class,
He tries again unwelcome to persist
An uninvited presence to obtrude,
Though not for long, as now a sharper gust
Sets him a-reeling, much to his dismay:
And ere his balance lost can be regained,
Another and another makes him spin,
And still another lifts him off his legs
And sends him whirling helplessly away.
  His passion with the provocation gone,
Our northern friend as blandly as before
Breathes back again the scattered parts of speech,
That greet us now in metrical refrain,
By two harmonious voices blithely sung—
  "The very best way to lengthen the day,
  Is to steal a few hours from the night, my dear."

A little pause to this succeeds, and then
Reverberant from the adjoining woods
That take the burden up in gladsome glee,
Is plainly heard this lightsome melody:
  "The young May moon is beaming, love,
  The glow-worm's lamp is gleaming, love,

How sweet to rove through Morna's grove
While the drowsy world is dreaming, love;
Then awake, the night looks bright, my dear,
Tis never too late for delight, my dear,
And the very best way to lengthen the day,
Is to steal a few hours from the night, my dear."*

Ha! The musicians, see, on yonder path,
Hither they come from cottage on the ridge—
Their figures are discernible, though yet
Occasionally hidden by the shrubs,
Through which the track irregularly twists:
Two people in the blossomed spring of life,
A man and woman seemingly attached
By other ties than their united hands,
Locked playfully together on their way.
The garden passed, the lower corner turned,
A deviating side-walk they pursue,
That to an open spot before us leads,
Girt by a bushy belt, and in the midst
A graceful Myall † droops its bending boughs,
O'ershadowing a pretty rustic bench,
Near which the pair attractive make a halt,
And thus to her companion speaks the fair:
"Oh, yes, indeed, it is a splendid night,
I'm not a bit inclined as yet for sleep;
Nor you, I'm sure; but now I'm out of breath,

* Moore.
† One of the prettiest sights in the Australian bush is a ridge or plain dotted with Myall trees, either singly or in groups. Their branches hang down like those of the weeping willow.

Then let us stay awhile at 'Mary's tree,'
The one you named, so loving, after me."

"No sooner said than done," the other cries;
"We're nearly there already; but, look here!"
And then an arm he passes round her waist,
Raising the other to the silver groups,
Still speaking, though the sounds fall short of us,
To her, attentive noting them and him.
While close communing on the worlds afar,
We'll judge from what they seem, of what they are.

He was a man whose whole appearance showed
A busy mind within a vigorous frame;
His action the result of thought matured,
And following sharp upon the other. For,
Whenever mind considers and projects,
Delay in purpose mars its best effects;
As ready marksman must his trigger pull
At instant aim, or else his aim is null.
One who could value at their heavy cost,
The so-called pleasures of the world at large;
Shaping his ends probationary here,
To dovetail permanent with those hereaft.
Good-will to all is written on his brow;
And not that he has never had to feel
And suffer, too, from selfishness of some
(Indeed, they hardly could have used him worse,
His perseverance is his only purse)
Who failed to alternate the golden rule,

"How you'd have others act, so do to them;"
For you may notice he has raised his hat,
As if in homage to the mighty power
Whose works he is discussing—thus you see
His hair, once dark, is prematurely grey.

She was just such an one as he would choose,
Gentle and kindly, with domestic views,
Aware that much of feminine display
Is precious time and labour thrown away;
That wives, as wives, were never meant to roam,
But show their best attractions when at home,
And so fulfil th' original intent
With which they first were made, and hither sent—
To be, as most impressively expressed,
A *helpmeet* for the solitary breast.

She, conscious, finds that acting up to this,
Has very much promoted wedded bliss,
Despite the modern folly which can say,
Woman with man should equally hold sway;
Destroying, whereon they could best rely,
The sense of chivalry, a certain tie.
But she, the worth of "willing strong right hand"
That clasps her now, can fully understand,
And, like a woman true, prefers to cling
To him who studies her in everything.

Such are the twain so picturesquely placed;
And by their upturned faces, side by side,
They evidently both have much essayed

Of blessings physical to make the most,
For healthful features now reward their care.
But now they move, and hand in hand again
Make for the resting-place before described;
She takes the seat, he nestles at her knees,
And so in full enjoyment take their ease.

Then, meditatively, the lady speaks:
"This loveliness around is truly sweet,
Yet grand withal, my darling, is it not?
'On such a night as this,' I often think,
With such Venetian skies above our heads—
You the Italian, I the Jewess—am
In pretty story told by poet true,
With so much grace; what say you, sir, to that?"

"Madam, with all due deference, I reply,
That Jessica is pictured 'passing fair;'
This may account for your unbounded praise."

"Go to, go to, sir; now I think again,
Lorenzo was much handsomer than you;
So the similitude will not apply."

"Ha, ha! Ha, ha! You've made it do so now,
For Jessica, just like a little shrew,
Slandered her love."

"And he forgave it her."

"Dont quote a part, and leave the context out,
As 'tis too much the habit now-a-days.

But come, old fellow, let us sing a song,
And leave this "keen encounter of our wits;"
We'll say the battle is, as usual, drawn."

"For sake of peace then, we'll suppose it so,
And now a greater compliment I'll pay.
I won't declare at times you're not a shrew
(At this a sudden something made him wince),
But this I will—when man a maiden woos,
And confidently takes her to his heart,
The highest happiness for him on earth
Is the supreme sensation of delight
That defamation or deceit was not*
In her for whom he fondly found a home."

Her glowing cheeks display the joy complete
These words of rare affection have produced,
And with a lengthened look of living love
She forward leaned to reach his trustful face,
And with caresses countered his embrace.

This ebullition of the feelings spent,
The Lady speaks again, in social bent.

"And now, my love, with what shall we commence,
One of our old duets, 'Ye Banks and Braes;'
Or no—yes—wait—the day has been so hot
(The glass was over ninety in the shade)—
Something less effortful; suppose instead

* See Motto—Title Page.

We have some recitations. Oh, and yes,
I quite forgot, you promised me a piece
On the event the latest English Mail
Made us acquainted with, in deep regret.
I find myself continually since
Without premeditation, dwelling much
On the associations thus called up.
The pretty air of one of his old songs
Haunts me particularly, and the words
Float whispering by me everywhere I go—
So much so that last night I had a dream
(When my uneasiness unsettled you,
Remember asking what had me disturbed,
And I—to-morrow you shall know—replied):
  Fancy transported me to noble pile,
Where all of him that's mortal now remains—
Companion fitting of the worthies near,—
And the creations of his fertile brain,
The whole of them, stood mournfully around.
But presently from out the motley throng
That reverentially made spacious way,
Came softly 'Tiny Tim' and 'Little Paul,'
So ivy-mantled with abundant wreaths
As hardly to be recognised, and these
They twined most tenderly about his tomb,
The while the vast assemblage raised their voice,
Chanting the ballad of the which I spoke—
'Twas this excited me, and then I woke."

  "Oh, a dainty plant is the ivy green,
  That creepeth o'er ruins old;

Of right choice food are his meals, I ween,
In his cell so lone and cold.
The walls must be crumbled, the stone decayed,
To pleasure his dainty whim,
And the mouldering dust that years have made
Is a merry meal for him.
Creeping where no life is seen,
A rare old plant is the ivy green."*

"A curious dream, but harmonizing true
With all your previous very natural thoughts;
My piece is not quite finished, and I fear
'Twill not explain my feelings half so well
As the spontaneous image pictured yours;
However, here, the will is for the deed.

Dickens is dead! An unexpected call
Has summoned one who beautified the world;
Through every thoughtful household, great or small,
His genial sympathy has wound and curled.

Dickens is dead! Unwillingly the wires
Wailing, like harp Æolian when the power
That gives it utterance strong grief expires,
Brought us the news—and sad became the hour.

Dickens is dead! And we have lost a friend
True to himself, and so to us the same;
Humanization was his aim and end,
And has he not succeeded? Answer, Fame!

* Pickwick, Chap. vi.

Dickens has gone! But never shall depart
The heaven-ward influence he leaves behind—
A rich endowment from the founder's heart,
To benefit not some, but all mankind.

Dickens has gone! Before he went above
No quest deserving ever met with "nay;"
And when he must denounce, 'twas done in love
To drive the demon Selfishness away.

Dickens has gone! The "old old fashion"* came
And wrapped from us his riddle unrelate;
But solved for him the deepest we can name—
"Of godliness the mystery is great."

"'Tis very true indeed: the closing words
Of his last number, too, were very strange—
'Comes to an end.' Oh, when that comes to us,
I hope we may be found as well prepared."

"Amen, say I to that, for us and all!
Another verse or two I meant to add,
To draw a moral from what went before,
Holding his life as an example up;
But then if to be good is to be glad,
I really fancy this is most attained
(Except by few high-gifted, such as he),
In living thus retired from ceaseless crowd;

* "The old old fashion—death."—Dombey and Son, Chap xvi.

And I have good authority for this.
You know—
but now, my darling, 'tis your turn
To give a recitation ; let it be
(Reverting to the theme you first began)
The little piece you wrote that me compelled
To pity take on you, for such despair
Was never previously by words conveyed."

"No, no, sir, tell the truth, and rather say
The one that riveted your captive chains.
But oh ! what's that ? it gave me such a start—
A paddymelon,* hopping through the grass.
Now fronting us he sits ; he shall decide
Between us in the matter of my song.

NENEMOOSHA.†

Nenemoosha ! Sweetheart mine
Thinkest thou of me ?
Sitting there beneath the vine
On the balcony.
May I hope that as I wander
Far away from thee,
Absence makes thy heart grow fonder
Beating now for me !

Nenemoosha ! Lover mine
Yes—I think of thee ;
Near that earnestness of thine
Now I long to be.

* The ordinary name of a small animal of the kangaroo species.
† Nenemoosha is the Indian word for sweetheart, in Longfellow's poem of "Hiawatha."

For I'm lonely as you wander
  Though I bid you go,
"Absence makes the heart grow fonder"
  Now I keenly know.

Nenemoosha! Sweetheart mine
  Bid me come to thee;
More than ever now I pine
  By thy side to be.
Say to me—my only love,
  Come again once more,
And I'll never let you rove
  When this parting's o'er?

Nenemoosha! Lover mine
  Set thy soul at rest—
Come, and gladly I'll recline
  On thy faithful breast.
Now I've proved how true thou art
  Come again, I pray,
And I'll tell thee from my heart
  "Stay, my darling, stay."

And now, Sir Judge,—but I declare he's gone!
Well, never mind, I'll call upon the trees—
Unique Australian products like the most,
For here they shed their bark instead of leaves;—
How well to them applies the adage old
'Familiarity does breed contempt,'
So very little we regard them here;
And yet already in far distant lands

They're highly valued at their proper worth.
For size, the Californian forest kings
Are by our giant emperors thrown in shade;
In fifteen springs a gum-tree in Algiers
Attained the growth of oak of hundred years;
And many of Italia's mountains bare
Can now their shelter cool and fragrance share.*
  But come, produce authority to show
That life retired is such beatitude;
'Twill puzzle you, I think, to make your case."

"'Tis from th' immortal poet 'glorious Will,'
And it confirms me in my previous thoughts.
Upon our own resources falling thus,
We're most inclined to make the best of all;
Nor party doings need our minds disturb.
How often are we led to wonder why
Some wear their life out in incessant whirl,
To gain an *ignis-fatuus* for their pains—
  For popularity is nothing else.
When nearest you approach it, and prepare
With sense of certainty to hold it fast
Because you feel your stepping has been firm:
One little slip, howbeit e'er so small
And in minute proportion to the rest,
Puts you completely down; and when you rise
'Tis but to find your meteor has flown
To where, if you continue to pursue

* See article from "New Orleans Picaynne," quoted in "Queenslander," September 25, 1869.

You'll have to traverse all the ground again,
With no more real progress in your dance
Than criminal on treadmill makes advance.
  E'en if the ugly toad existed here
We'd see at once the jewel in his head;
And all the other drafts the poet names
That may be drawn on nature, can be met
And realize the best in all we see."

"A piece of fine morality, well told;
Allow me to congratulate you, sir;
Though your allusion doesn't help you much
With me at least. In fact I must confess
It seems to savour of the fox and grapes;
And, notwithstanding all you have alleged,
I cannot help imagining one ought
To be where one could do the utmost good;
And with such clear debating force as yours,
You should be in the senate, and amend
With something not by lawyers made to bend
Our statute books—that common sense offend."

"*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*, my dear;
Stick to your songs, that is, and leave to me
The weightier questions of morality—
Though some make very light of them, I fear."

"I'm glad you grant me such a privilege;
In what I said just now, I did but quote
Yourself and others—'tis to me remote.

Song, genial song, with this I'm quite content;
To sex 'unfair' the heavy parts I'll leave.
Ours be the task to string poetic pearls
Embellishing the routine limbs of life
In lightsome mood, appreciating yet
The sterner work that must by those be done
Whose powers are greater—by wise purpose so.
But sometimes still creations lords relax
And can as playful be as gentle maids.
'Apollo doesn't always bend his bow'
(I'll pay your classical quotation back).
For once you know a certain person wrote
In a fair lady's album on a time
Some funny lines that somewhat ran like these;
And when I've told them you, 'twill then be time
To gain our cot, the little hill to climb.

You ask me here a "a line to place,"
But how? Shall I essay to trace
Some fairy landscape, or poetic theme
Like "Ever of thee I fondly dream."
At all events you greatly flatter
You've given me *carte blanche* in the matter;
I'll therefore try my best to do,
Hoping 'twill pleasing prove to you.

But how, again? Aye, there's "the rub;"
I hope you wont use India rubber,
For if you should my effort snub
I'm sensitive, and apt to blubber;

And then I'd have—O, bitter blow—
To change my style, and gloomy grow,
Singing of misery and woe—
O, pray, don't force me to do so.

Well, to begin. "Oh, Ladye Fayre,"
Excuse my freedom when I dare
The line to draw I'm most inclined to,
Between your charms of person and of mind too;
But no—the effort's vain—I can't succeed,
And for excuse have only this to plead—
The charms of each are blended all so fine
It is impossible to draw the line.

I've failed, alas, but yet I will not blubber,
Because you now won't want the India rubber:
The page is filled—my lucky stars I'll thank
If you should *prize* what I have drawn on *blank*.

Yes, and the damsel did esteem it much;
So much indeed, that as a meet reward
She recompensed him with her precious self,
And made worth living for, two lonesome lives;
With each one's mission properly fulfilled—
Enjoying to the full all-hallowed love,
And the affection of a sterling heart
That no vicissitude can ever part."

Thus speaking, he uprose him from the ground,
At which his wife impulsive left her seat
And cast her gentle arms about his neck;

The while he draws her head upon his breast—
A happy couple standing thus confessed.

And now thick vapour rolls around the lawn
Filling the space betwixt the bordering woods,
And as it rises to the homestead ridge
The voice once heard before speaks once again.

"Mortal! 'Tis o'er; no doubt to thy amaze,
Has been exhibited the twofold phase
Of Nature's law, to illustrate its force;
Resistless in as universal course
Through quiet country new as regions old,
'Mong all who to their fellow-feelings hold.

And those who these ignore, misguided souls
Whose hearts, like grates in winter, void of coals,
Seem the more dreary, in that they possess
All the facilities for grate-fulness—
Give them some loving prayers for their reform,
And timely change from dogma so unwarm;
As yonder paradise, wherein I dwell,
Would be no heaven to such—but rather hell.

Let selfish cynics argue as they will
And much unscrupulousness practise still,
And so successful gratify their greed
That some might think they held the better creed.
Let them alone*—endure them for the time—
But keep from contact with the grovelling grime;

* Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.—Hosea iv., 17

Act up to your high teaching; feel the glow
That meretricious worldlings never know.
  Love's exercise in elevating earth
Conduces also to a loftier mirth;
In mind harmonious it frequent stirs
The godliness that greatest gain confers,
Having the duad promise, by decree
'Of life that is, and life that is to be.'"

The voice was hushed—and soon the surging haze
Rose quickly, and enveloped from my gaze
All that remained of this delicious feast;
And from my dreaming I was now released.

BOOK II.

PART III.

EPILOGUE.

THE task performed I could not shun*—
Say, Critic, is the laurel won ?
Don't think I so presumptuous be
As to expect a full grown tree
Is requisite from which to cull
A wreath to decorate my skull.
If you can grant the smallest meed
'Twill be encouragement indeed!
The guerdon of a little leaf
Will be enough for my belief,
And spur me on with courage grand
At verse again to try my hand.
(Although 'tis not my avocation,
'Twould out of place be—on a station).
But if you don't approve of this,
You and the public, then, I wis,

* See Preface, line 4, *et seq.*

I'd better not attempt to bore
By ever writing any more.

* * * * *
* * * * *

I may believe myself to be
A poet with a capital P*
But that won't make me—not a bit,
"Poeta nascitur non fit;"
'Tis you and public must adjudge
The cause 'twixt poesy and fudge.

* * * * *
* * * * *

I'd like a parting word to say
Upon the subject of my lay:
It struck me as I homewards went,
My mind on what I'd seen intent,
That indiscretion, want of skill
For any cause, must work it ill—
Severer, too, in bad results,
Than all opposing catapults.
And this much more to love applies,
Because its younger votaries
Have no experience at command
When they this business take in hand;
So their unskilfulness provokes
From lookers-on, all sorts of jokes,
Of which the nature just depends
As maker's disposition tends;
And ridicule's weapon keen

* See Preface to "Sunbeams in Queensland."

As "Chassepot," "Needle," or "Martine."
Again, the older, versed in this
Love's science, often do amiss;
Some haply (or unhappily) from home
In search of fruit forbidden roam;
Others, too, sometimes with their spouse
Indulge in horrid civil rows.
All this is very indiscreet
And causes love to scent unsweet,
To those who only want a handle
By which to propagate a scandal;
Ignoring, narrow-minded churls—
That they were ever boys and girls.

* * * * *

* * * * *

So, let us all contend with will
Th' eleventh commandment* to fulfil,
Polishing up the most we can
This glorious link 'twixt God and man!
And thus disarm the rusty snarls
Of all the unbelieving carles,
Perchance convert them, and repay
With good their evil—wish we may.

And with the hope each lover true
(Which may include both me and you,
Married as well as single, too)

* St. John xiii., 34

Will never henceforth have to rue
A faithless love, a faithless friend,
But all their lives in loving spend—
I finish all I had to write,
And so I'll say, good night, good night!

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